

First Joint Manitoba/North Dakota Envirothon Successful



Manitoba and North Dakota students working at a stop along the Lewis & Clark Trail

The International Peace Garden was the setting for the first Joint Manitoba/North Dakota Envirothon held May 30 through June 1, 2002. Competing in the contest were 37 teams of students in grades nine through 12.

Many months of planning and more than 100 volunteers helped make this competition highly successful and provided a unique opportunity for North Dakota and Manitoba students, teachers, advisors and committee members to interact.

Students were tested on the topics of forestry, soils, water, wildlife and a current environmental issue. The issue selected for 2002 was Introduced Species and Their Effect on Biodiversity.

The first day students used their knowledge and skills as they worked to solve problems at stops along three testing trails. The Lewis & Clark, Bottineau and Peace trails provided challenges to determine who knew the most about natural resources and the environment.

On Day Two, each team developed a 10-minute oral presentation on addressing biodiversity issues in the Turtle Mountain watershed. A panel of four judges scored the presentations, which were added to the trail test scores. The top three teams were announced, and they gave their final presentations for a panel of five judges. Scores were retabulated and the final places were awarded.

The top three finishers for Manitoba placed as follows:

- First -- Swan River Regional Secondary School
- Second -- Northwest Soil Management Association
- Third -- Fairholme Colony

This year's North Dakota winners placed as follows:

- First -- West Fargo High School Packers
- Second -- Sargent Central High School.
- Third -- Kenmare Public School Team # 3

The first place teams competed at the National Envirothon in Amherst,

(Envirothon...cont. on page 2)

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Mass., July 29 through August 2, 2002. The North Dakota team finished 27th of 49 teams in the competition.

The Envirothon is a problem-solving natural resource competition. Team members demonstrate proven concepts of hands-on education, combined with the excitement of spending a day in the outdoors.

The goal of the Envirothon is to cultivate students' awareness and enhance their knowledge of natural resources and environmental issues, while developing critical thinking skills. Related objectives include building partnerships and encouraging a commitment to responsible future decisions about environmental issues.

The North Dakota Envirothon is sponsored by the Coalition for Conservation and Environmental Education (C2E2). The coalition partnered with local, state and federal natural resource-oriented agencies, organizations and businesses to make this competition a huge success. The primary source of funding for the North Dakota Envirothon is the Section 319 Nonpoint Source Pollution

Management Program. These funds are matched by several state and local sources.

Planning already has begun for next year's state competition to be held at Crystal Springs Lake in May 2003. For more information, contact Diane Olson, North Dakota Envirothon Coordinator, at 701.845.1674.



First place North Dakota Envirothon Team -- West Fargo High School Packers. From left to right: James Vranish, Matthew Olson, Brian Johnson, Chad Wallock, and Calvin Erickson. Also pictured are Jim Collins (North Dakota Department of Health) far left and Glenda Fauske (North Dakota Forest Service) far right.



The Grant Park High School team from Manitoba and trail guide Terry Lund (Foster County Soil Conservation District manager) working at a trail stop.

North Dakota Department of Health NPS Website On-line

The North Dakota Department of Health recently added a website to address nonpoint source pollution topics.

To get more information on NPS subjects or to view past issues of the *Quality Water* newsletter, go to:

<http://www.health.state.nd.us/ndhd/envIRON/wq/nps/>



2002 Is "Year of Clean Water"

To celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Clean Water Act, 2002 has been designated as the "Year of Clean Water." Activities have been planned throughout the nation in recognition of this historic occasion.

The Clean Water Act set the goal of restoring and maintaining the chemical, physical and biological integrity of the nation's waters. In the three decades since its passage, Clean Water Act programs have yielded measurable improvements in water quality. Lakes and streams once devoid of fish and other aquatic life now support numerous and varied aquatic populations. Point source discharges from municipal and industrial sources are being monitored and controlled. Rivers no longer catch on fire, large pollution-based fish kills are a rarity, and almost all drinking water meets the minimum criteria for health and safety.

The success of Clean Water Act programs may have created a false sense of security in the general public. Even though clean water is cited as one of the nation's highest priorities, there has been a steady decline in public understanding and the commitment to protect and restore the nation's water resources. While technological advances provide solutions to pollution problems, they also raise new concerns. For example, nonpoint sources of pollution from urban and rural areas alike are posing an increasingly significant threat. The public stewardship ethic of the 1970s must be rekindled to address how human activities influence the nation's water resources.

Oct. 18, 2002 marks a milestone in the efforts to protect our nation's water resources. It also presents an excellent opportunity to enhance

public appreciation for the importance of water resources, celebrate successes and build a better understanding of remaining challenges and solutions.



The North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH), Division of Water Quality is planning a statewide water quality monitoring day in conjunction with a national effort to be held October 18. Monitoring program volunteers, students and the general public are invited to participate in the effort to test waters across the state. All volunteers will test for temperature, pH, dissolved oxygen and turbidity and enter the results into a national database. The data will be available at www.yearofcleanwater.org. To register your site and receive a water quality test kit, contact the NDDoH.

In addition, a team of five students and two advisors recently were selected by the NDDoH and the Coalition for Conservation and Environmental Education, on behalf of Governor John Hoeven, to attend the Youth Watershed Summit. The summit is sponsored by America's Clean Water Foundation (ACWF) and the Smithsonian Institution. This event is being held in cooperation with a number of federal agencies and national water-related organizations.

The Sargent County Envirothon Team includes student representatives Christian Linderkamp of Cogswell;

Olivia Breker of Havana; and Evan Fust, Lisa Pherson and Rob Wyum of Rutland. The students attend school at Sargent Central High School. Julie Hassebroek and Bonnie Anderson of Forman were selected as advisor representatives. Hassebroek is the NDSU extension agent for Sargent County; Anderson is the office manager of the Wild Rice Soil Conservation District.

The representatives were chosen based on their accomplishments at the Joint Manitoba/North Dakota Envirothon, held May 30 through June 1, 2002, at the International Peace Garden. More than 15 North Dakota teams participated in the Envirothon, a problem-solving, natural resource competition for high school students.

The Youth Summit will offer the students and teachers an opportunity to share information about a local water quality project with other students from across the country, participate in investigations of the Chesapeake watershed and learn firsthand from scientists researching the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Students also will have the opportunity to visit Capitol Hill and meet with executives from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Agriculture and Department of Energy. The students will present a report upon completion of the project and return to North Dakota.

For more information, please visit the www.yearofcleanwater.org website or contact:

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Watershed Planning Assistance Available From NRCS

submitted by Keith Weston, Natural Resources Conservation Service



The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has a long history and tradition of watershed planning in North Dakota. Most of this watershed planning was completed for Public Law 83-566 Small Watershed Program (PL-566) flood control projects by the NRCS Natural Resources Planning Staff (NRPS) located at the state office in Bismarck.

However, because of limited funding in the PL-566 program for the past few years, the NRCS has been directing its experienced watershed planning staff assistance towards "program-neutral" planning. This type of planning assistance addresses environmental, social and economic concerns within a watershed and assists local land users and decision makers in addressing their watershed natural resource issues. This type of watershed planning enables stakeholders to develop a watershed plan that addresses all pertinent resource needs and is not biased by program requirements.

North Dakota NRPS uses a nine-step planning process to develop program-neutral plans. These plans then can be used to secure a variety of technical and financial assistance from other federal programs, such as the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP), Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP), EPA Section 319 (nonpoint source pollution management) Program, and PL-566 Program.

The North Dakota NRCS is fortunate to have retained a planning staff that is able to develop program-neutral watershed plans. Many states across the country have dissolved or lost their NRCS planning staffs due to agency restructuring and attrition. Currently, the North Dakota NRPS is made up of four individuals: a planning specialist, a biologist, an economist and a water quality specialist. The staff also has access to all of the other NRCS

technical disciplines, such as engineering, forestry, agronomy, GIS, range science, soils and plant materials.

The North Dakota NRPS is available to assist local, county and state units of government, as well as groups of land users and owners, with any or all steps of watershed planning (shown on next page). To request watershed planning assistance, contact Thomas E. Jewett, state conservationist, at 701.530.2000; James Schmidt, assistant state conservationist (for water resources), at 701.530.2074; or your local NRCS field office.

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Watershed Planning Checklist

Pre-Planning

Working With People

- ☐ Request for assistance received and identification of underlying issue(s) reasonably solvable with areawide planning
- ☐ Initial planning area boundary established
- ☐ Stakeholders identified
- ☐ Leader(s) and power actors identified
- ☐ Key roles and members identified (e.g. chairpersons, advisors, workers, staff)

Organization of People and Info.

- ☐ Organizational structure (e.g., council, committees, subcommittees, teams) selected
- ☐ Logistics identified (e.g., meeting places, stakeholder contact methods, meeting management methods, documentation and community communication requirements)



Planning

Phase 1

1. Identify Problems & Opportunities

- ☐ List of major problems (scoping) and opportunities drafted

2. Determine Objectives

- ☐ Major problems or opportunities restated as objectives

3. Inventory Resources

- ☐ Conditions needing to be inventoried identified, including related ecological, social and economic factors
- ☐ Inventory techniques selected consistent with accuracy, available time, staff and funding
- ☐ Inventories conducted to determine current conditions and causes of impairment

4. Analyze Resources Data

- ☐ Existing conditions compared to desired future conditions (DFCs) and quality criteria (QCs), and deficiencies and needs noted
- ☐ Causes of impairment validated
- ☐ At-risk ecological, social and economic conditions and interactions with DFCs and QCs determined

Phase 2

5. Formulate Alternatives

- ☐ All reasonable, acceptable measures, practices and management identified and clearly documented

6. Evaluate Alternatives

- ☐ Consistent evaluation of all alternatives made (effectiveness, profitability, acceptability, environmental impact, etc.)
- ☐ Documentation of effects on critical ecological, social and economic factors (National Environmental Policy Act requirements as applicable)

7. Make Decisions

- ☐ Alternatives selected that meet objectives, DFCs/QCs and other criteria

Phase 3

8. Implement Plan

- ☐ Strategies and methods identified to carry out decisions (e.g., information-education, financial assistance, technical assistance for consultation, regulatory)
- ☐ Schedule developed and strategies carried out

9. Evaluate Plan

- ☐ Application rate of decisions determined
- ☐ Achievement of DFCs/QCs determined
- ☐ Need for iterative planning and adaptive management determined

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